

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claims 1-57 (Cancelled)

Claim 58 (Currently amended). An isolated mutated ~~Bacillus~~Bacillus cell, which has a reduced expression-level of polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25, or SEQ ID NO:4, and which secretes higher amounts of at least one heterologous polypeptide of interest, when compared with an otherwise isogenic but non-mutated cell.

Claims 59-60 (Cancelled).

Claim 61 (Previously presented). The cell of claim 58, which is a *B.alkalophilus*, *B.amyloliquefaciens*, *B.brevis*, *B.circulans*, *B.clausii*, *B.coagulans*, *B.lautus*, *B.lentus*, *B.licheniformis*, *B.megaterium*, *B.stearothermophilus*, *B.subtilis*, or *B.thuringiensis* cell.

Claim 62 (Cancelled).

Claim 63 (Previously presented). The cell of claim 58, wherein the polypeptide has at least 97% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 64 (Previously presented). The cell of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide has at least 99% sequence identity to the mature polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 65 (Previously presented). The cell of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide comprises the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 66 (Cancelled).

Claim 67 (Previously presented). The cell of claim 58, wherein the at least one heterologous polypeptide comprises an enzyme.

Claim 68 (Currently amended). A method for producing a polypeptide of interest, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) cultivating a mutated *Bacillus* cell, which has a reduced expression-level of polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4, and which secretes higher amounts of the polypeptide of interest, when compared with an otherwise isogenic but non-mutated cell; and
- b) isolating the polypeptide of interest.

Claim 69-70 (Cancelled).

Claim 71 (Previously presented). The method of claim 70, wherein the cell is a *B.alkalophilus*, *B.amyloliquefaciens*, *B.brevis*, *B.circulans*, *B.clausii*, *B.coagulans*, *B.lautus*, *B.lentus*, *B.licheniformis*, *B.megaterium*, *B.stearothermophilus*, *B.subtilis*, or *B.thuringiensis* cell.

Claim 72 (Cancelled).

Claim 73 (Previously presented). The method of claim 68, wherein the cell in step (a) is mutated in a position characterized as within SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 74 (Currently amended). The method of claim ~~73~~⁶⁸, wherein the polypeptide has at least 97% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 75 (Currently amended). The method of claim ~~73~~⁶⁸, wherein the polypeptide has at least 99% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 76 (Cancelled).

Claim 77 (Previously presented). The method of claim 68, wherein the at least one polypeptide of interest comprises an enzyme.

Claim 78 (Currently amended) An isolated mutated ~~Bacillus~~^{*Bacillus*} cell, which has a mutation in a gene encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to the

polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:25, or SEQ ID NO:4, wherein said mutation results in reduced expression of said polypeptide where said ~~bacillus~~ Bacillus cell secretes a higher amount of at least one heterologous polypeptide of interest compared to an otherwise isogenic but non-mutated Bacillus cell.

Claim 79 (Currently amended) The cell of claim 78, in which the gene is partially ~~of~~ or fully deleted from the chromosome.

Claim 80 (Currently amended) The cell of claim 80, in which the gene comprises at least one frame shift ~~of~~ or non-sense mutation.

Claim 81. (New) The cell of claim 78, wherein the mutation is in a gene encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 25 or SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 82. (New) The cell of claim 78, wherein the mutation is in a gene encoding a polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 83. (New) The cell of claim 78, wherein the mutation is in a gene encoding a polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 25.

Claim 84. (New) The cell of claim 78, wherein the mutation is in a gene encoding a polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 4.

Claim 85. (New) The cell of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide consists of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 86. (New) The cell of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide consists of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 25.

Claim 87. (New) The cell of claim 63, wherein the polypeptide consists of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 4.